

## National Maritime Center Processing Times – Update

On December 20, 2013, the National Maritime Center (NMC) announced that it was experiencing elevated processing times and inventories for credential applications. This information bulletin is intended to provide the merchant mariner community with an update on our current status. Although the issues identified in the previous bulletin have largely been overcome, several challenges remain that have significantly impacted the NMC's ability to return to previous performance levels. In this bulletin, we want to share what we believe have caused the delays, the actions we are taking and what actions mariners and employers can take to help us, and themselves, get our net processing time (NPT) back to under 30 days, which remains as one of our primary goals at the NMC.

The recent implementation of the new STCW Final Rule and medical certificates, a shortage of several NMC employees, and persistent IT issues have all contributed to the continuation of elevated processing times and credential application inventories. These issues, coupled with an unusually high 'Spring Surge' of credential applications, have created an environment which is challenging our previously established turnaround times. Since January of this year, the NMC has worked aggressively to address these performance degrading issues while issuing nearly 40,000 credentials and 90,000 medical certificates. Extensive training and process enhancements have been implemented to increase efficiency and productivity. Expanded uses of overtime funds have been employed in an effort to boost production as well as new hires to replace recently departed personnel. Our network connectivity was recently greatly increased allowing much improved efficiency and speed. While all this had been instituted, we have been extending mariners credentials on a case-by-case basis and will continue to do so.

What can you do to help? As always, the industry at large and individual mariners can do a few things to help us improve our processing times:

- We ask that marine employers be conscious of what the mariners are experiencing and allow us to get their credentials to them as soon as we can.
- Renewals: Submit applications for renewals at least 90 days before your expiration. Visit the [National Maritime Center's](http://www.uscg.mil/nmc/) website for information on the new process for Post Dating straight renewal applications (credential creep and delayed issuance are no more).
- Originals: Submit your applications for original credentials approximately 90 days in advance of when you will need it.
- Medical Certificates: If you are unaware of the new medical certificate requirements, visit our website for additional information. Ensure you bring a copy of Navigation and Inspection Circular (NVIC) 04-08 with you when you get your physical and ask your practitioner to provide as much information as possible for any listed medical condition. Most of the information needed to complete your medical evaluation, including additional tests, can be found in NVIC 04-08.

Contact the Customer Service Center at [IASKNMC@USCG.mil](mailto:IASKNMC@USCG.mil) or 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662), and visit our website at <http://www.uscg.mil/nmc/>. Thank you for your patience while we process your requests.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey P. Novotny  
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard  
Commanding Officer